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AUTHOR Gazda, George M.
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ABSTRACT

Student support programs 20 years hence will most likely be directly related to the configurations of the schools in which they are located. In order to speculate on the nature of the support programs, therefore, it is necessary first to speculate on what types of models schools will assume. This chapter considers some of the more prominent student support program models that are in practice or under development and some of the major reasons why change is necessary. Special attention is paid to the interactive roles of the reinvented school and the community. The author hypothesizes that the transition period of the next 20 years will be characterized by multiple roles and models for school support personnel, in which they will all receive more training in working with parents and families, and spend more of their time in this area. (GCP)

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By

George M. Gazda

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Student Support Programs: 2021

George M. Gazda

Student support programs 20 years hence will most likely be directly related to the configurations of the schools in which they are located. In order to speculate on the nature of the support programs, therefore, it is necessary first to speculate on what types of models our schools will assume. Let us consider some of the more prominent current models that are in practice or under development and some of the major reasons why change is necessary.

The traditional factory model, or graded schools, is still the primary system operating in the vast majority of public and private schools, although there are other models, such as the Montessori schools, Corsini 4-R schools, Paideia schools, the Basic School, shared decision-making (site-based managed) schools, Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, Hudson Institute's Modern Red Schoolhouse, the Co-Nect School, Alissi's Outcomes Driven Development model, Glasser's School without Failure model, School–Business Community Partnership schools and variations of these models, among others. Radical changes are rarely possible in the traditional graded school because the model itself forces conformity to its essential concepts. Likewise, most site-based managed schools are warmed-over traditional graded schools with a couple of variations. This is true because the teachers who plan these schools know best what they have been doing, which is following the traditional school model. When site-based (managed) schools become radically different, it is because they have adopted an entirely *new* model that is radically different from the traditional model. (A comprehensive treatment of what is wrong with current traditional schools can be found in Gazda, 1998.)

In September 1993, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education published *The Next Generation School Project*. More than 300 Georgians, myself included, were members of the 10 ad hoc design teams. The publication includes summary reports of each of the following ad hoc teams: (a) Outcomes and Instruction, (b) Readiness to Learn, (c) At-Risk Students, (d) Re-invent Secondary Education, (e) Technology, (f) Quality, (g) Human Resource Development, (h) Intercultural Education, (i) Governance and Leadership, and (j) Seamless Educational Community. I chose to be a member of the Re-invent Secondary Education team because the title suggested this team would be most receptive to radical change proposals, and it was.

Our team chose seven vital change criteria that a school system could use to organize itself differently in order to be more effective. The seven criteria were

- self-paced learning (a student moves as quickly or slowly as he or she is able),
- mastery-based progress (students work on achieving a set level of mastery before progressing to the next level),
- nontracking placement (students will not be placed in classes based on ability or achievement test scores),
- continuous progress (each student progresses at his or her own rate without fear of failure),
- total reorganization commitment (totally reorganize the system to include the vital change criteria),
- external influence (involve parents, businesses, and community volunteers), and
- cooperative learning (students help each other in cooperative learning groups).

Although not listed as one of the seven vital change criteria, options for flexible class scheduling, employment of developing technologies, modification of teacher and staff roles, and the like are encompassed by criterion five.

In order to make the seven vital change criteria operational, school systems and teachers might select methodology that:

1. engages students actively.
2. provides for multiple forms of delivery and evaluation.
3. accommodates varied time frames and settings. The schedule and school year might be flexible; the classroom could be extended to include varied resources within a community.

4. utilizes technology as a means for teaching and learning.
5. emphasizes students' development and use of acquired knowledge and skills.
6. incorporates higher order thinking skills so that students become critical and creative thinkers who can evaluate information, opinions, processes, and outcomes.
7. in all aspects of the curriculum enables students to become effective communicators in oral and written form.
8. includes collaborative learning, allowing students to assume different roles in learning.
9. promotes mastery and self-paced learning whereby students can become independent workers.
10. is be varied for remediation and enrichment.

Administrators, teachers, parents, and students must become aware that different methodologies have different outcomes and lead to varied means of evaluation. Methodologies should be integrated to produce the ultimate in teaching and learning. Time, resources, staff development, and support must be available to ensure an awareness of and competence in different methodologies (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 1993, pp. G-9–G-10).

Interactive Roles of the Reinvented School and the Community

Schools Reaching Out

The school can reach out to the community in a number of ways. Some examples of these ways are described in *The Next Generation School Project* (Georgia Partnership, 1993, G-10–G-11):

1. Schools can implement transition-to-work programs, such as apprenticeships; cooperative education (offices, retailing, and service occupations); clinical internships (e.g., in medical fields); professional internships in legal and governmental fields; and work-study programs.
2. Community service can be integrated into the school curriculum for credit. Student involvement in community service can lead to the increased sense of civic responsibility and self-esteem that comes from giving to others.
3. Schools can offer advanced placement courses with cooperating colleges, making the transition to college seamless.

4. Tech prep programs can prepare students for entry into technical institutes and technical occupations. These programs can (a) adapt math, science, and English courses to include applied learning; (b) revise vocational education programs to include substantive academic content as it is applied to the workplace; (c) adopt career-focused curricula; (d) articulate with postsecondary institutions; and (e) seek advice and assistance from business and industry representatives.
5. School outreach programs that also serve people beyond K–12 can be adopted; for example, through the creation of family centers.

Parents are the key to the success of their children and must be meaningfully involved with the education of their children. Schools can assist undereducated parents to improve their parenting as well as reading and math skills so that they can better assist their children.

Communities Supporting Schools

Just as the schools reach out to involve the parents and community, the community at-large can support the schools in a variety of ways. *The Next Generation School Project* (Georgia Partnership, 1993, pp. G-11–G-12) lists several options:

1. Adopt-a-school programs and business partnerships can assist particular schools, often as an educational outreach of the chamber of commerce.
2. Mentoring can give the student an adult friend and mentor.
3. Businesses in some school systems can provide part-time teachers for certain topics.
4. Business and industry can have lend-a-manager programs to assist schools in implementing programs and innovations.
5. Parents and businesses can form carefully organized and structured advisory committees. Two examples of these committees in Georgia schools are strategic planning and sex education review.
6. Big Brother and Big Sister programs can provide support and encouragement to many students.
7. Local business equipment can be made available for instructional purposes in school or business settings.
8. Businesses can sponsor staff development sessions, career days, job fairs, and field trips.

9. Culturally diverse role models from the community can volunteer in schools. These role models might include business leaders, religious leaders, entertainers, athletes, or government leaders.
10. Communities and schools can develop collaborative programs to concentrate on keeping students in school, as exemplified by Cities in Schools, the nation's largest nonprofit organization devoted to dropout prevention.
11. School systems can couple service agencies, such as state departments of human resources and education, with families in their schools.
12. The community can become involved in the schools through school renewal site-based decision-making teams. For example, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has sponsored local decision-making teams for schools that are attempting renewal through some type of site-based management school model.
13. School systems can take advantage of the educational support of certain businesses and industries in their communities, such as Kroger, Pizza Hut, and Domino's.

Assessment

Assessment of student achievement in traditional graded schools is inadequate in many ways. Several of the weaknesses of current practices are described in *The Next Generation School Project* (Georgia Partnership, 1993). Some of these weaknesses are as follows:

1. Most assessment is through short-answer or multiple-choice teacher-made exams. These tests assess mostly recall or recognition of material covered in class, the lowest levels of cognitive learning. Higher order thinking skills and creativity are not assessed. The curriculum and teaching and learning are therefore driven by this low-level assessment practice.
2. Current practices provide no opportunity for student self-assessment, an integral part of the learning and goal-setting process.
3. Behavioral traits and life skills that are necessary for effective living and productivity are minimally assessed (mainly through deportment evaluation in elementary schools).
4. Letter and numerical grading foster competition among

students and lead to winners and losers. Losers (those with less than average grades and scores) lose their incentive to achieve, and winners frequently work just hard enough to achieve A's and then slack off without maximizing their learning abilities.

Because current grading is done on some sort of normal curve standard, it essentially forces one-half of the population to be below average. Being constantly ranked below average is a disincentive to the intrinsic motivation to learn. In order to become and remain motivated, the learner needs to experience repeated success and thus learn to enjoy learning for its own sake. This will not happen when external rewards and punishment through grades is the primary motivational system employed by the schools.

In order to remedy the current prevailing assessment practices, it is recommended that multiple assessment procedures be employed. For example, the development of exhibitions aggregated in a portfolio can be structured to reflect higher order thinking skills and the student's ability to synthesize what he or she has learned. With the employment of a continuous-progress, mastery learning model, assessment can also be accomplished through mastery of "learning units," using a check-off system, with no grades, that simply shows satisfactory mastery for the unit and readiness to move to the next unit. The Corsini 4-R School employs this system very effectively in its nongraded school model.

Teacher Role Changes

In the preceding section of this chapter, numerous changes were outlined for improving the current traditional school model. Embedded in these changes are significant role changes for the teacher. Space does not allow a comprehensive treatment of these changes here, but a more comprehensive treatment can be found in chapter 2 of Gazda et al. (1998), *Human Relations Development: A Manual for Educators*.

Peeler (1992) reports that there seems to be a consensus among leading educators, psychologists, and philosophers that "tomorrow's adults must be prepared for a lifetime of inquiry, analysis, collaborative learning, problem solving, and decision making" and that "these abilities will be the 'basic skills' of the future" (p. 7). According to Peeler, this new definition of learning will require the teacher's role to shift to one more like that of a coach, facilitator, listener, model, guide, and mediator. Peeler

believes that the teacher will also need to become computer literate and employ a highly interactive computer system to provide guidance and instruction to students. Koppich, Brown, and Amsler (1990) point out that career ladder programs have added new roles for experienced teachers, including curriculum development and program or staff development, supervision, evaluation, case management, and training.

Firestone and Bader (1991) have observed that "schools are not only expected to solve a great variety of social problems from the drug problem to the AIDS crisis but must also act as sources of day care, entertainment, and community cohesion" (p. 120). Obviously, these expanded services assumed by schools also add new roles for the teacher that are frequently shared with specialists in the school setting, such as counselors, social workers, nurses, and psychologists.

A Projection of the Nature of Student Support Programs: 2021

If the seven vital change criteria described earlier in this chapter are incorporated into models of schools of the future, they will closely resemble the Corsini 4-R School, because it already incorporates these criteria. A description of the school model and locations where it is operational can be found in Evans, Corsini, and Gazda (1990). The school design of the future, with its modified curriculum that includes training in life or social skills as well as the three R's, will require support personnel to provide consultation and training or co-training in life and social skills that is continuous, developmental, and comprehensive throughout the entire preschool through grade 12 sequence and perhaps beyond. Currently, such skills training is being done only in isolated instances and rarely is it comprehensive because support personnel themselves have not been trained systematically in these skills. Skills training provides a preventive mental health model that will become more imperative for the future. (Remedial models are not applicable to preventive mental health interventions.) Health care programs will come to accept the need for preventive models to reduce the cost of health care, both mental and physical.

If school models similar to the model found in the Corsini 4-R School are employed, student learning efficiency will be maximized and there will be time in the curriculum for life and social skills training as well as the 3 R's, the arts, and sports and

recreation. The concept of lifelong learning fits this model school system because time limits are not placed on mastery of the curriculum contents. Students will go through the curriculum in a self-paced fashion based on continuous progress, and mastery of knowledge and skills broken into developmental units.

If teachers are going to assume the roles of coach, facilitator, listener, model, guide, and mediator (Peeler, 1992), they will need support personnel to assist them, perhaps even train them, in the skills these roles require. As technology becomes more directly involved in instruction, the teacher's role may shift to allow more time for personal interaction with students, and support personnel roles may shift to more consultation and less hands-on work with students.

Politically, it is popular to advocate for more instructional time for teachers with lower student–teacher class ratios. Chances are that this concept will be pushed to the limit before advocates realize what many already know—class size is not the real culprit in the failure of our schools to produce greater student achievement. New models of schooling will eventually prove to be the real answer to improvement, but it will take many more years for these models to proliferate. In the meantime, the brightest of our students will continue to be siphoned off to private schools where they can handle the traditional school model, and our inner city schools will all become alternative-type schools reaching the status of correctional institutions. The roles of support personnel for these inner city schools will obviously differ significantly from those in private schools and suburban schools on a par with private schools. Instead of preventive mental health interventions, the support personnel in inner city schools will be doing intensive remedial work, individually and in small groups. Much of their time and expertise will be used to deal with the physical condition of the students because of drug-related health problems, child abuse, violence, and teenage pregnancies. More direct work with parents through community family centers will be attempted to allow for earlier interventions and more comprehensive interventions in preparing children for schooling. Child day care and adult education programs will involve support personnel including counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and physician assistants.

In an attempt to expend more dollars on academic instruction, we will likely see a trend, furthered by politicians,

to purchase support services from private practitioners in order to reduce long-term costs of retirement pensions and health care insurance. For example, Dykeman (1995) surveyed 253 school district superintendents in Washington state and found that 20% of all counseling in state public schools was contracted to outside providers. Respondents indicated that the present level of privatization would remain steady over the next five years. In the case of both present and projected levels, small districts rely significantly more on contracted services than medium or large districts do. If this strategy prevails, support personnel will likely require a license in their specialty in order to practice in the schools. Social workers may become the primary support personnel left in the schools to provide liaison with governmental human resource agencies.

Multiple education and community service models are likely to emerge in the next 20 years as we search for preferred model(s), a scenario that is already developing. These next 20 years could be a transitional period during which many different options are tried until the more effective models emerge. The most radical experimental models will be found in the public school sector where most of the problems lie. It is not unlikely that the roles of support personnel in the private school sector will remain least changed because the school models will likely retain most of the characteristics of our traditional schools.

Home schooling continues to increase in popularity and this may accelerate as distance learning technology is perfected. The private support personnel contracted by the school system may be employed to assist this growing group of students.

Although multicultural issues have not been singled out thus far, socially and politically they will increase in their effects on schooling. More of the academic curricula and the life and social skills curricula will be devoted to these issues. Support personnel will receive more and more training in understanding and dealing with multicultural-related issues and problems. Bilingual support personnel will be in great demand.

With increasing application of the charter school concept and site-based managed schools, and more opportunity for experimenting with different school models, there is less control over curriculum, school staffing, and so forth, and therefore we are likely to see less regulation of schools and personnel by state and regional accrediting associations. This projected lessening of "standards" could affect the number and quality of support personnel in the schools. If private contracting of support

personnel develops, required licensure could potentially ensure quality but not necessarily quantity of support personnel.

Conclusion

I have championed radical changes in the organization and administration of the schools in the United States for the past 15 years. I have encountered intense resistance from virtually all segments of the educational and political arenas, and from parents themselves. It seems that very few are satisfied with the current status of public education, but few are willing to do more than make minor adjustments to a system that long ago outlived its usefulness.

Even as huge sums of money are expended on the public school system, it continues to decline in effectiveness. This condition will only get worse until radical changes outlined in the first part of this chapter are instituted. My experience suggests that it will take 10 to 20 years before the current system reaches its lowest level. In the meantime, a transition period of experimentation with modified school models will occur.

The transition period of the next 20 years will be characterized by multiple roles and models for school support personnel. Their roles in the private schools will not change radically because the system will not change radically inasmuch as the students in private schools will continue to succeed in a traditional school model. Technology, however, will introduce some rather radical changes. More learning and instruction will be enhanced technologically, which will likely lead to more self-instruction.

In the public school system, the suburban schools will resemble the private schools, but the inner city schools will resemble detention centers. Support personnel will be needed to "maintain order" (i.e., to police) and to work for minimal achievement goals, especially of socialization. More medically trained personnel such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners will be required to help manage drug-induced problems and sexually active behavior and its attendant problems of sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy. At the high school levels, counselors will function more like current rehabilitation counselors who work with those with disabilities to help them become employed. Social workers will likely continue to work as liaisons with the students and parents and governmental agencies.

One can only conjecture as to whether the support personnel will be a part of the school staff, work through an agency such as a family center, or be contracted privately. As indicated earlier, schools may very well follow the HMO and PPO models of health care delivery and contract with private practitioners. If they do, counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and nurses may form HMOs and PPOs or become a part of current physician-dominated HMOs and PPOs.

Even though greater effort and political interventions will continue to be made to try to improve the stability and quality of family life, schools or school-related agencies such as family centers will continue to assume roles heretofore assumed by parents. It is quite possible that at some point the state or federal government will pay a parent to stay at home with preschool children (not unlike welfare) rather than seek employment outside the home. In any case, all school support personnel will receive more and more training in working with parents and families and spend more and more of their time in this area.

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About the Author

George M. Gazda received his doctorate from the University of Illinois with a major in counseling. Since 1963, he has been associate professor, professor and research professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, the University of Georgia. Since 1967 he has concurrently held the positions of consulting and now clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Medical College of Georgia. He was associate dean for research, College of Education, the University of Georgia, from 1984 to 1994, when he retired.

Dr. Gazda has been president of the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision, Association for Specialists in Group Work (which he co-founded), American Personnel and Guidance Association (now American Counseling Association), and Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Gazda is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama. He is a certified trainer of Psychodrama and a licensed psychologist in Georgia. The author, co-author, or editor of 6 books and more than 100 chapters, manuals, articles, and monographs in the professional literature, Dr. Gazda has consulted with numerous organizations and universities both nationally and internationally.